

the States, and then it should begin to deal with the very real needs of the Forest Service, to deal with its maintenance backlog. Some of these roads need dramatic amounts of work in the short term. I have some in my district that have been promised for several years that roads, washed out in flood 5 years ago would be rebuilt; and yet the money, as I say, each summer has been taken away and spent on fighting forest fires because there is not enough money in the budget to fight forest fires because, of course, the administration has no money because they have given it away in tax cuts to all the rich people. So this is a pretty strange way to run a country and make a policy on Federal lands that are so precious to the heritage and to the environmental future of our Nation.

ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, as I fly across America, which I do every Monday and Friday from Seattle to Dulles Airport, every time I fly I realize what a beautiful country we have, truly the most beautiful one both for our democracy and in our beautiful lands. And those lands now are still at risk because the current administration, as the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) so well laid out, threatens to violate the roadless area rule and violate the very clear desires of Americans to protect the last remaining pristine areas in our national forests.

Now, we have an opportunity to stop this administration from gutting the roadless area rule. And I hope that my colleagues will join the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT) and myself in co-sponsoring the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2003.

This bill will simply incorporate the existing rule that protects the last remaining one-third of our national forests that truly are the crown jewels of our national forest system. And it will protect by preventing future road building, road building that has already covered 360,000 miles of roads in our national forests already, most of which are built for timber harvest, much of which is no longer usable. At least 60,000 of those miles of road are no longer usable by anyone, even though they were used and built with taxpayer money. That is enough road to go around the world 16 times already in our national forests.

Now, in response to that, Americans came out in droves over the last 3 years at over 600 public meetings held by the Federal Government to ask Americans what they wanted to do with their national forests. At those over-600 meetings of 2 million Americans, both in person and by e-mail let-

ter, responded with the very clear and dramatic message, preserve these last remaining virgin pristine areas. Over 96 percent of Americans who addressed this issue had a single message for the President of the United States: keep the clear-cutting and the bulldozers out of these remaining forests. And we got some good news rhetorically from the administration because rhetorically the administration said that they are going to keep the roadless area rule. But, it is one of those big "buts" that you hear so much of in life; they were going to slash and burn by exempting Alaska. And they were going to slash and burn by exempting other States, as long as in some process, it remains uncertain, the Governor of that State wanted to exempt that particular State.

In fact, some of the biggest tracts, in fact, the biggest tracts, the most biologically intact tracts of land in the world for temperate forests are in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests which are right now protected by the roadless area rule, which if the President has his way will no longer be protected. These are the most biologically productive rain forests in the world that the administration wants to now open up to clear-cutting and road building, to strip away the protection that over 2 million Americans spoke so loudly to keep, and that is just wrong. It is wrong because Americans do not want it, and it is wrong because it violates the whole spirit of the roadless area rule.

You cannot say you are going to uphold the roadless area rule and then strip out the largest forests in the United States from its protection. It is kind of like the President saying, We will have the No Child Left Behind Act, but we will exempt the children in Alaska because they are some kind of lesser Americans, and then we will also exempt the States where Governors say we do not want to have this protection of No Child Left Behind.

We believe that all American forests, including Alaska, including all 50 States, are entitled to the roadless area rule.

Now, in my State of Washington, we are kind of proud of our forests too. We have three very beautiful roadless area rules that we want to see statutorily protected, protected by a law passed by Congress so that no President of either party in the future can cave in to special interests to allow clear-cutting in these forests. These are in the Colville National Forest, they are in the Dark Divide area in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and my personal favorite, the Olympic National Forest close to where I live in Kitsap County, Washington.

In that forest there are two trees at the end of a trail in this roadless area, two beautiful Douglas firs. They are about maybe 8 feet in diameter. Incredible trees. We call them Theodore and Franklin after the Roosevelts who were so responsible for protecting these

areas that are now subject to the roadless area rule.

Our message from Washington State is, Theodore and Franklin deserve protection, and their cousins in Alaska deserve protection, and every tree in these protected roadless areas deserve protection. I hope my colleagues will join me in co-sponsoring this bill and send a message to the administration, we want the roadless area, not just pieces.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon today.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at noon.

PRAYER

Dr. David Halpern, Rabbi, Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Brooklyn, New York, offered the following prayer:

Our Father, Sovereign of the world, we stand in the House of freely elected representatives of all the American people. These men and women, dedicated and strong, have accepted the awesome burden of promulgating the laws by which our free society lives and shall live. They wear this mantle of leadership in profoundly perilous times.

The threat to human security wears many faces: Tyranny, terror, religious oppression, racial tension, disease, hunger and despair. We seek the solution to these problems. We search diligently for the road to peace, for the path to harmonious living, for the means to achieve human dignity for us all created in Thine image.

May we always remember that to safeguard our own freedom, we must speak out against oppression, and, where warranted, even take up arms against it. To enjoy the blessings of our own wealth, we must also provide for the underprivileged and the needy. To be truly strong requires more than strength of arms, it requires strength of spirit.

Almost six decades have passed since the age of the Nazi death camps, the places where 6 million Jewish men, women and children had their lives cruelly and brutally ended, their only sin that they were born Jewish. The world has watched helplessly as in the last decade hundreds of thousands of different nationalities and ethnic groups have been slaughtered. We pray that the destruction of man by his fellow because of religious beliefs or racial origins will be known no more;